

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method comprising:
 2 receiving a request from a device across a public network
 3 at a first network component to establish a connection between
 4 the device and a private network;
 5 determining if the device is authorized to connect with
 6 the private network;
 7 if authorized, forwarding the request from the first
 8 network component to a second network component; and
 9 the second network component creating a connection
 10 between the private network and the device via the first
 11 network component.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the second
 2 network component establishing a temporary connection between
 3 the device and a device included in the private network.

1 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising, if not
 2 authorized, denying the device access to the private network.

1 4. The method of claim 1 in which the private network
 2 is separated from the public network by a security mechanism.

1 5. The method of claim 1 in which the first network
 2 component and the second network component have a connection

3 lasting as long as a mechanism at each of the components
4 supporting the connection remains active.

1 6. The method of claim 1 in which the first network
2 component and the device have a connection lasting as long as
3 a mechanism at the first network component and a mechanism at
4 the device supporting the connection remain active.

1 7. The method of claim 1 in which the determining
2 includes authenticating a password.

1 8. The method of claim 1 in which the public network
2 includes the Internet.

1 9. The method of claim 1 in which the first network
2 component and the second network component include proxy
3 servers.

1 10. An article comprising a machine-readable medium
2 which stores machine-executable instructions, the instructions
3 causing a machine to:

4 receive a request from a device across a public network
5 at a first network component to establish a connection between
6 the device and a private network;

7 determine if the device is authorized to connect with the
8 private network;

9 if authorized, forward the request from the first network

10 component to a second network component; and
11 create, with the second network component, a connection
12 between the private network and the device via the first
13 network component.

1 11. The article of claim 10 further comprising the
2 second network component establishing a temporary connection
3 between the device and a device included in the private
4 network.

1 12. The article of claim 10 further comprising, if not
2 authorized, denying the device access to the private network.

1 13. The article of claim 10 in which the private network
2 is separated from the public network by a security mechanism.

1 14. The article of claim 10 in which the first network
2 component and the second network component have a connection
3 lasting as long as a mechanism at each of the components
4 supporting the connection remains active.

1 15. The article of claim 10 in which the first network
2 component and the device have a connection lasting as long as
3 a mechanism at the first network component and a mechanism at
4 the device supporting the connection remain active.

1 16. The article of claim 10 in which the determining
2 includes authenticating a password.

1 17. The article of claim 10 in which the public network
2 includes the Internet.

1 18. The article of claim 10 in which the first network
2 component and the second network component include proxy
3 servers.

1 19. A system comprising:
2 a device configured to connect to a public network;
3 a server component configured to connect to the public
4 network; and
5 an agent component configured to connect to the server
6 component and to a private network separated from the public
7 network by a security mechanism and configured to provide the
8 device with access to the private network via the server
9 component and the public network.

1 20. The system of claim 19 in which the agent component
2 is also configured to provide any number of devices configured
3 to connect to the public network with access to the private
4 network via the server component and the public network.

1 21. The system of claim 19 in which the agent component
2 is also configured to provide the device with access to a
3 device included in the private network.

1 22. The system of claim 19 in which the server component
2 and the agent component are both extensible to support any
3 protocols used by the public network and by the private
4 network.

1 23. The system of claim 19 in which the public network
2 includes the Internet.

1 24. The system of claim 19 in which the server component
2 is also configured to authenticate the device.

1 25. The system of claim 19 in which the agent component
2 is also configured to maintain a connection with the server
3 component as long as a mechanism at each of the components
4 supporting the connection remains active.

1 26. The system of claim 19 in which the server component
2 is also configured to maintain a connection with the device as
3 long as a mechanism at the server component and a mechanism at
4 the device supporting the connection remain active.

1 27. The system of claim 19 in which the agent component
2 is implemented on at least one of the security mechanisms.

1 28. The system of claim 19 in which the agent component
2 is implemented inside the private network.

1 29. The system of claim 19 in which the server component
2 and the agent component are both implemented on at least one
3 of the security mechanisms.

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